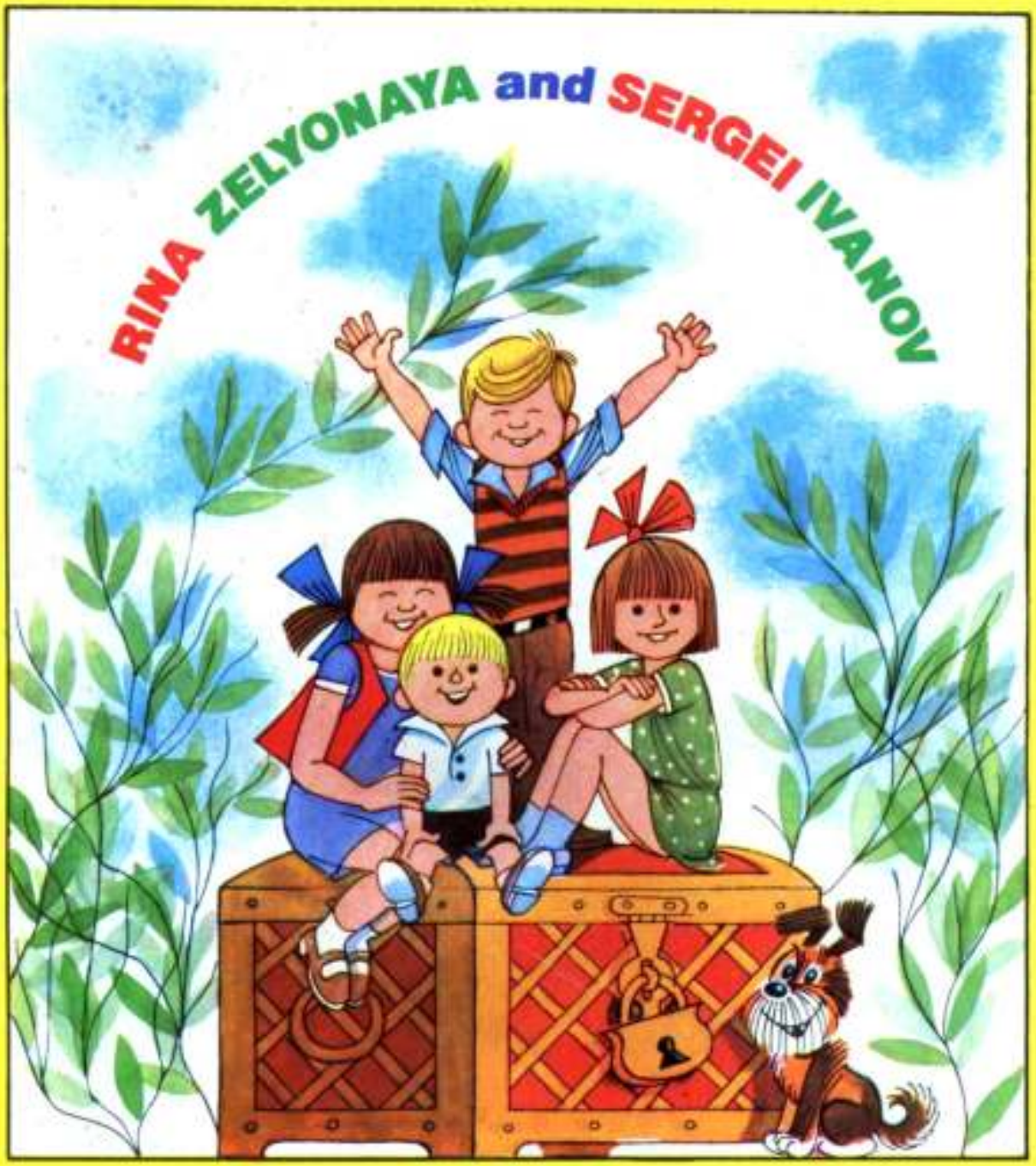
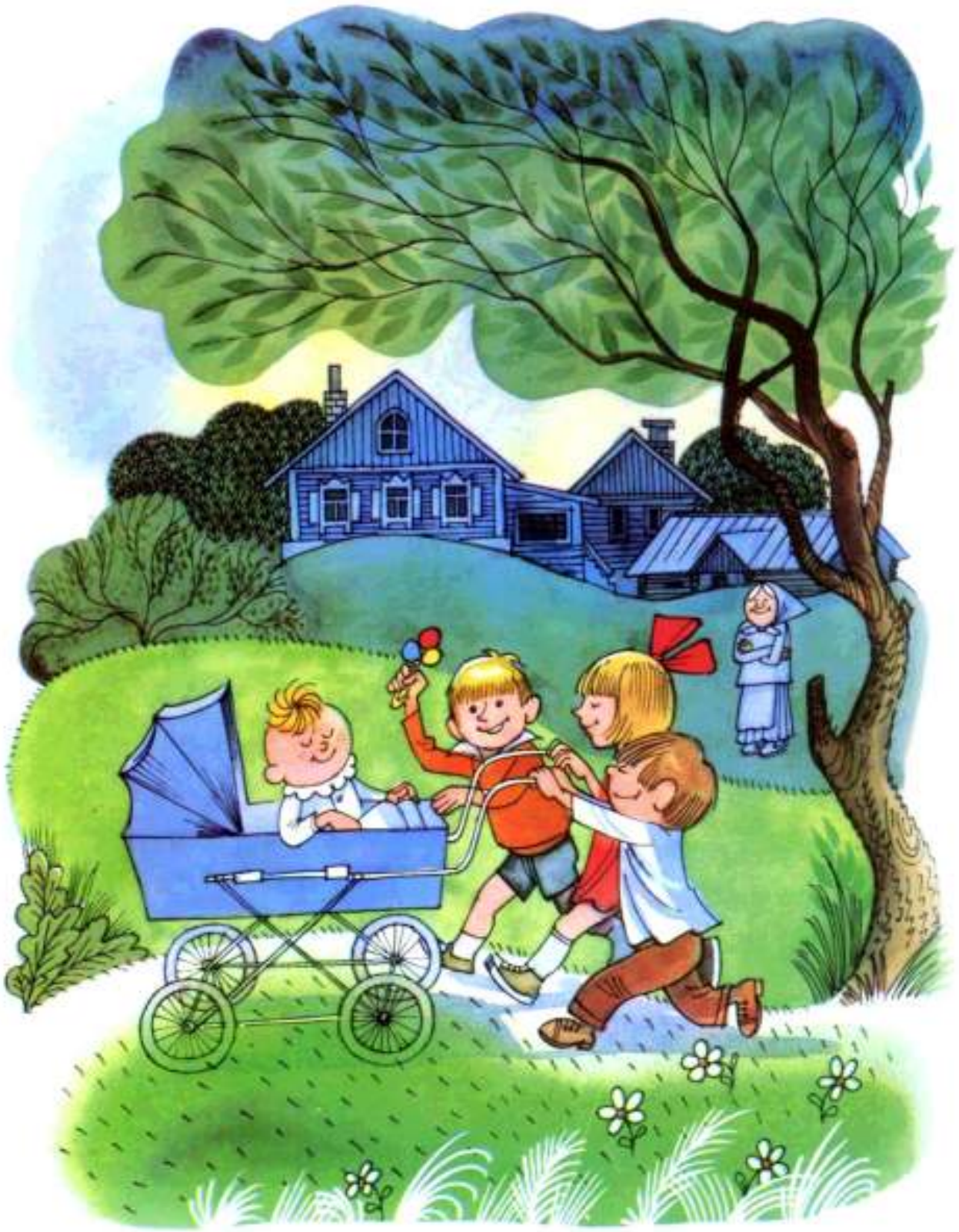
RINA ZELYONAYA and SERGEI IVANOV



THE CEDAR CHEST



WHAT'S IN THE CHEST?

"The Cedar Chest" might seem like a strange title at first, but we'll tell you why we chose it.

There are many fairy tales in which elves, witches, giants or princesses had their treasures locked up in a chest. Besides, in olden times every family had a chest of some kind in which their most precious possessions were kept. There might be an old snuff box, a Turkish shawl, an antique silver necklace, and many other fine and useful things in a family's cedar chest.

If you look hard, you'll find many useful things in this little book, too, things that will come in handy in life.

Most important, though, is that you understand that we live among people. All people are the same in that no one wants to be hurt, and that a smile will always bring you a smile in return.

So let's think about each other.

LIFE IN THE STONE AGE

This is a story a boy once told us. We don't know whether he made it up, or whether someone else told it to him.

Back in the Stone Age, when people lived in caves and were armed with stone axes and rocks, they were very hard on each other. For instance, if two men met on a path, instead of saying, "Good morning. How are you?" one would hit the other on the head with his stone axe. That saved him the bother of asking how the other man was.

The trouble with this was that he never knew when somebody else would come along and hit him on the head. It

was a very worrisome kind of life, to say nothing of all the walking dangers like mammoths and sabre-toothed tigers that roamed around in those days.

One bright day a man set out for a walk in the forest. He walked on and on, and as there was no one in sight, he decided all the other people must have been killed off by their neighbors. Days passed, and then suddenly he came upon a man on the path. He was so happy he dropped his stone axe and ran towards him. But the stranger didn't know why he was running towards him and so raised his axe to kill him. Then the first man held out his hands, as if to say: "See? I'm unarmed."

That's how the first handshake came about. And the first friendship. And the first courteous meeting.

Ever since then friendship and courtesy have meant a lot to us.

GROWNUPS

The rule hidden here is a hard one, because we're going to talk about grownups.

Your parents are grownups. They take you to the circus, buy you ice cream, and maybe even give you a puppy for your birthday. Grownups bake the bread we eat, make the clothes we wear and build the houses we live in.

It's very hard to be grown up, because you have to know how to do so many things that children never have to do. That's why grownups need to be looked after and cared for—by you.

How can you help them?

This will take some thought. Look around and see what

you can do. Perhaps Grandpa has misplaced his glasses. Can you find them? Or are your sister's scissors in the other room? You can go for them while she is sewing. There are so many little errands that are waiting for you to attend to them each day. And each of the errands you do will carry a bit of your goodness to whomever you have helped.

If you see someone on the street who seems unusual in any way, never stare. You can glance at the person if you must, but be sure he or she doesn't notice it. And when someone speaks to you, especially if it's a grownup, be sure to turn towards the person and look at him while he is speaking to you.

ISN'T THAT FUNNY?

If nobody knew how to laugh, everyone would have a long face. Sometimes, when you're watching TV, or when you're in the circus and a clown's performing, or when you're reading a funny story, you begin to laugh. You laugh and laugh, and laughing makes you feel good.

Laughing is an important part of life, and if you're a good sport and like fun, you'll have fun. However, if the joke's on you, don't pout. Just grin and bear it.

There are times when laughter can be very rude. Say, your teacher has taken you to a museum. Everybody else there is

busy looking at the paintings on the walls. That's when your best friend tells you a joke, and you burst out laughing. Your laughter startles all the other people, because it's always very quiet in a museum. When everybody turns to stare at you, you don't feel like laughing very much.

Or say, one day when it's slippery outside a man slips on the ice and falls. His hat and briefcase fly off in one direction, and his shopping basket flies off in another. That's when one person will stop and laugh, and another, maybe you, will run over to help him to his feet and pick up his scattered things.

A DANGEROUS PAIR

Bragging and envy always go hand-in-hand.

At first, bragging doesn't seem very awful. Say, one of the boys has a new bike. Yes, it's new and shiny, and the other kids' bikes are battered. If he's the bragging kind, he'll act stuck-up and try to make the other kids feel that their bikes are junky.

A boy or girl who brags rarely has any real friends. Things get even worse when this boy or girl begins to feel envious of someone else. That's why if someone has something he doesn't have, he'll try to find fault with it. If it's a parakeet, he'll say it's the wrong color. If it's a new baby sister, he'll say sisters don't count. No matter what it is, he'll make fun of it and say it's no good.

Envy is a trait you must try to get rid of before it becomes a part of you.

A TERRIBLE TALE

This is what happened to a boy named Dima.

One day when he got off the bus, he was still busy thinking about the hockey match he'd just been to and dropped a gum wrapper on the sidewalk. It was a habit he had, dropping anything he didn't need on the sidewalk: candy wrappers, gum wrappers, popsickle sticks, bits of paper.

A few minutes later a gust of wind swirled bits of paper, newspaper and cigarette butts up into the air all around him. Candy wrappers fluttered about like butterflies.

All of a sudden a little girl appeared in the middle of all this swirling garbage. She was terribly frightened and was wailing and screaming. A gum wrapper was stuck to her cheek.

"Run!" Dima shouted. "Maybe we can escape!"

Just then the candy box hit him on the head. There was a ringing in his ears.

"Who threw a candy box out on the street?" he shouted so loudly that he woke up.

The alarm clock was ringing. Dima sat up in bed. He was still thinking about the little girl in his dream. The girl with the gum wrapper plastered against her cheek. It was the wrapper he'd dropped when he got off the bus. That's when he finally understood where the garbage on the streets comes from.

THE HOLE IN THE FENCE

Actually, peeping can be very interesting. But it's no fun at all if somebody's spying on you.

If somebody is, you come to realize that a peeping Tom is a clammy sort of person.

There's even a saying about people like that: curiosity killed the cat. If it did, it won't poke its nose into other people's affairs next time.

This is what we think, and we think it's right.

Then one day we come upon a knothole in a fence. That's a made-to-order peephole. The temptation to peep through it is more than we can bear.

What'll we do?

This is the kind of problem each person has to figure out for himself.

Still, there's another old saying: do unto others as you would have others do unto you. And that means if you don't want anyone to spy on you, don't you spy on anyone.

CAREFUL: ELBOWS

"Mabel, Mabel, if you're able, keep your elbows off the table." This is a good piece of advice, because if everybody put their elbows on the table, they'd keep jostling each other. You try spooning up your soup when someone's jostling your arm.

Table manners are really very important. That's why we never reach, but always say, "Thank you", when it's handed to us. Another thing to remember is not to slouch. Try imagining what a family slouching all over the dinner table would look like!

Some people think that the best way to pass through a crowd is to elbow their way through. But they're wrong. If you say, "Pardon me", people will always step aside to let you pass.

ANIMALS

What have animals to do with what we're talking about? Are we supposed to shake every dog's paw and say, "Good morning", to every cat on the street?

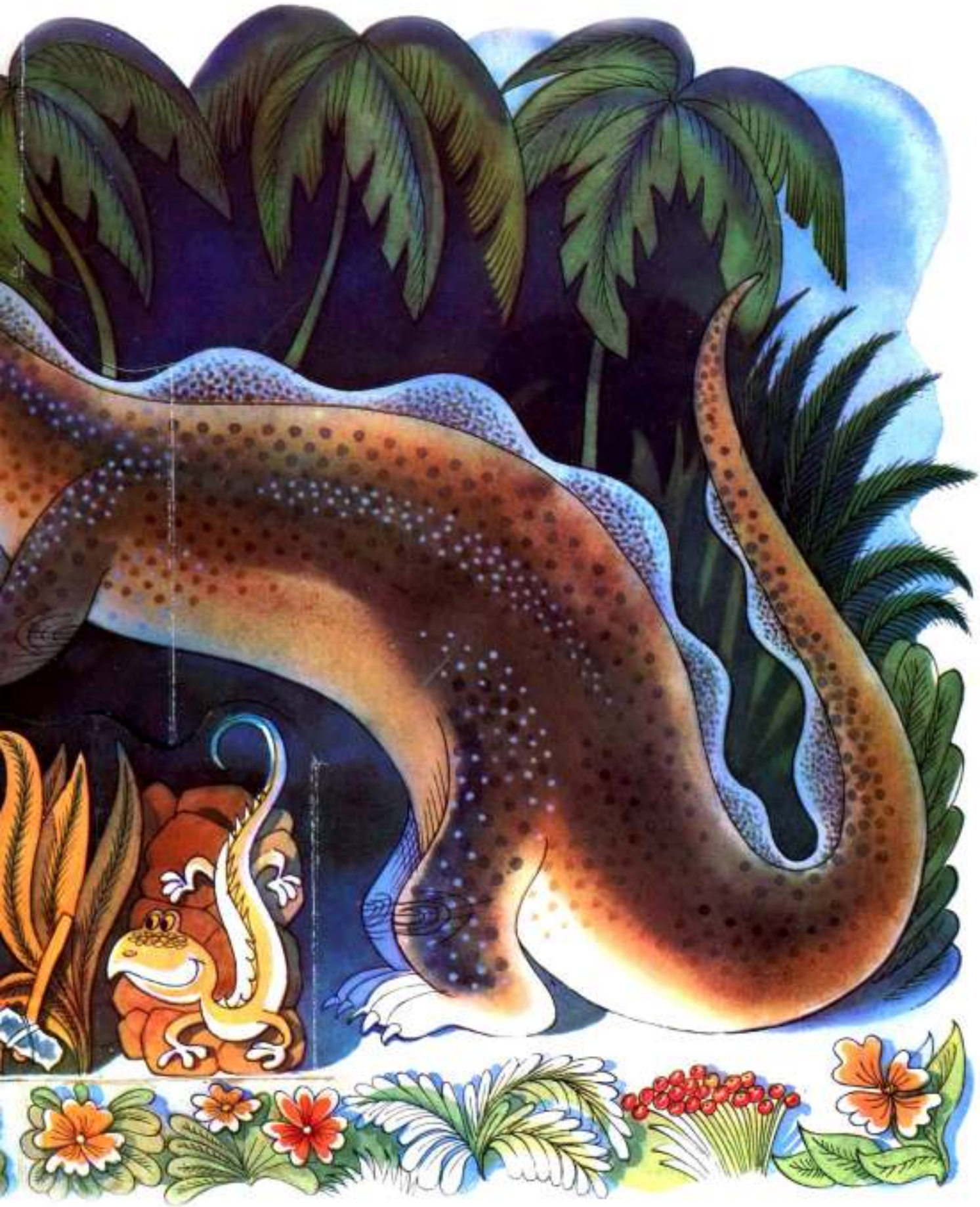
Of course not. But still, we must always be kind to animals.

The small birds in the garden are our friends, for they rid it of bugs and caterpillars.

Ants in the forest are our friends, too, for they help to keep it clean and healthy. Have you ever noticed the loads they carry? As compared with their own weight, it's as though a man were carrying a truck!

If you have a dog, you know how happy it is to see you come home. And you know it loves you more than anyone else on earth.

So hello there, all you birds and beasts and tiny creatures! I'll never harm you, but will always be good to you and see that no one else harms you, either.



Rina Zelyonaya
Sergei Ivanov
THE CEDAR CHEST
Illustrated by Viktor Chizhikov
Translated by Galina Glagoleva
Malysh Publishers
Moscow
Printed in the USSR
© издательство «Малыш» 1983